

From: ash@dragonpaw.org@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 4:28pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement.

I am writing in today to express my concerns regarding the proposed Microsoft settlement.

As clearly made evident in the trial, Microsoft has used, illegally, its status to crush many of its competitors. Many of those competitors are out of the market forever and many more will be unlikely to try and reclaim the territory that they lost to Microsoft. Netscape has said they are an information company, not a browser company and IE is likely to remain the dominant browser. Sure, Mozilla is great, but it is not written to by many sites that tend to write IE-compatible-only web sites. What ever happened to the open standards of W3C? Microsoft took them and 'extended' them in ways incompatible with the specification, just as they did with Java which ended up costing them their license to the language. (Sun Microsystems vs. Microsoft, etc...)

This is the way in which they operate. "Embrace and Extend" is their method of extending their monopoly. Unless they are forced to comply with open specifications and unless they are forced to make their specifications open, this will never change.

But yet, Linux, the biggest competitor to MS's monopoly is clearly excluded from the settlement. Linux isn't a company, neither is Apache or Samba. Many of these great products have companies selling them, but the core development of all of these products is handled by non-profits or individuals.

There is no requirement that the Samba people be told how to code to the CIFS layer or how to be able to handle the authentication to W2k boxes. There is no requirement that the Apache group be told all of the web-related APIs that exist. There is no requirement that Microsoft OS's not destroy the partitions of other OS's on which they share a drive. (As is the case with Win2k damaging Linux partitions and boot information in some instances.)

Linux and the open-source community is as much a part and a victim in this issue and they need to be included in any settlement.

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"The truth will set you free, but first, it will piss you off."